

# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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December 12, 2018

Chairman Ajit V. Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
455 12<sup>th</sup> Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20544

**RE: Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984  
(Docket 05-311)**

Dear Chairman Pai,

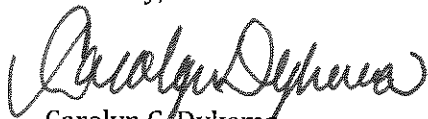
As the FCC considers the proposed rule change in docket 05-311 governing agreements between local franchising authorities and cable operators, I am writing in support of municipalities and public television here in Massachusetts. As a state legislator representing communities that rely on local access programming for important information and content, I have serious concerns about proposals that could dramatically inhibit the ability of public, educational, and governmental (PEG) stations to operate.

PEG channels play a vital role in informing and engaging our constituents on issues that are often overlooked by the news media and other cable programming. The municipalities and stations that provide this programming rely on revenue from franchising fees from large cable companies to operate. Fees assessed on private cable operators are small and capped at 5 percent of the company's gross income, but the money generated through these fees commonly supports 20 to 30 percent of a local access station's budget. The in-kind contributions that cable operators make as part of agreements with municipalities also provide significant community benefits. Historically, this structure has not inhibited cable companies' growth or operation, while making PEG programming possible and providing an essential public service.

The role that local access television plays in educating American citizens is vital to informed civic participation. This proposed rule change would allow cable operators to deduct in-kind costs from franchise fees, reducing or eliminating entirely payments that municipalities rely on to operate PEG channels. Participation in a democracy requires that citizens have the opportunity to become meaningfully informed about the issues that impact their daily lives, and this proposal creates a significant barrier to the dissemination of valuable content.

Please work to advance policies and regulations that protect the existing fee structure for PEG stations and local access television. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carolyn C. Dykema".

Carolyn C. Dykema

Massachusetts State Representative

8<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District